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ABSTRACT

To examine the theoretical status of ethics scholarship and to explore the historical and present directions of ethics in human communication research, this paper reviews more than 100 articles drawn from the speech communication literature. Following a brief introduction that sets forth the criteria for article selection, the paper discusses definitions of ethics in human communication. It then examines the articles according to the following groupings: (1) democratic ethics; (2) procedures, standards, and codes in ethics; (3) universal-humanitarian ethics; (4) contextual ethics; and (5) narrative ethics. The paper concludes that ethics research is healthy and vital, but that significant research questions still need to be answered in each of the five categories examined. The appended bibliography lists all references by category and includes a section on introductory books and articles. (FL)

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THE STATUS OF ETHICS SCHOLARSHIP IN SPEECH COMMUNICATION JOURNALS FROM 1915 TO 1985

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THE STATUS OF ETHICS SCHOLARSHIP

IN SPEECH COMMUNICATION JOURNALS FROM 1915 TO 1985

This article examines the theoretical status of ethics scholarship, examining the historical and the present direction of ethics in human communication research. Ethics scholarship is interdisciplinary and expanding in numerous academic disciplines. Although there is considerable diversity about what is "ethical," Speech Communication literature agrees on a need for "choice-making" in discerning an ethical position. Specifically, five different approaches to communication ethics are used for reviewing article contributions in communication studies: (1) democratic ethics, (2) universal-humanitarian ethics, (3) codes and standards for ethics, (4) contextual ethics, and (5) narrative ethics.

Introduction

Examining the status of ethics scholarship in the Speech Communication journals reveals beyond doubt the significance of such inquiry to our discipline. Over one hundred articles related to ethics of communication issues are reviewed in this article. The quantity and quality of the scholarship is encouraging, particularly in light of the concern offered by Callahan and Bok, in their concluding remarks from the Hastings Center project on ethics.

> American higher education is in the throes of many difficulties at present. They include declining enrollments, increasing financial pressure, the inability of many promising teachers and scholars to gain employment or tenure, and some degree of public criticism.... Few would openly contend that the main purpose of higher education, even of an explicitly professional education, is simply that of preparing students for better jobs and higher incomes. Most would assert just the opposite. Yet, the formal opportunities to pursue moral questions are often scant and episodic.[1]

For Callahan and Bok, ethics instruction is significant and necessary, but perhaps not the most "marketable"2 in a time of vocational and professional emphases. Though the job of teaching ethics in a pragmatic age is difficult, it is being tackled by a number of scholars in various academic disciplines, from business to medicine to theology and public policy. There are over seventy-five institutes recognized for their research focus on ethical issues.3 There are at least twenty-four journals devoted to the study of ethics and value issues, again in a variety of disciplines.

In our own discipline, the Speech Communication Association convention in Louisville, Kentucky, 1982, was centered on the ethics theme, "Communication, Ethics, and Values." SCA President, Kenneth Anderson, addressed the complexity of the ethics issue and our responsibility to confront such issues as communication teachers and scholars. The 1984 Speech Communication Association witnessed the approval of an "Ethics of Communication Commission," headed by Professor James Jaska of Western Michigan University. The 1985 SCA Convention at Denver will vote on the by-laws for the ethics commission and elect the first set of officers. The first Newsletter of that organization stated that fifty-three papers focusing on the ethics of communication were presented at international, national, and regional communication conventions during the 1984-1985 academic year. In essence, it seems that even in the midst of Callahan and Bok's pessimistic analysis of the university campus, numerous academics both in and outside the communication field are responding to ethics inquiry as relevant, contemporary, and a significant research concern.

Specifically, this article examines the scholarly contribution to

the study of ethics in various Speech Communication journals. The criterion for inclusion of articles in this review was that the term "ethics" be used in the title of the article. Some articles with "morals" or "values" in the title were also included, depending on their immediate relevance to the ethics issue. In a recent article, Vernon Jensen set the stage for a thorough investigation of ethics of human communication scholarship in our journals.

> Periodical literature in our field has also reflected a growing interest in ethics. One need only glance through recent volumes to get a picture of this. It is interesting to note in passing that when most journals in speech communication (and perhaps in other fields as well) are born, they include at least one article on ethics in their first or second volumes. This was true for the Quarterly Journal of Speech (Vol. 2, 1916), the Journalism Quarterly (1924), Southern Speech Journal (1936), Western Speech Journal (Vol. 2, 1938), Central States Speech Journal (Vol. 3, 1952), The Speech Teacher (1952), Today's Speech (1953), Journal of Broadcasting (1957), Journal of the American Forensic Association (1964), Association for Communication Administration Bulletin (1973), Human Communication Research (1974), Journal of Business Ethics (1982), and National Forensics Journal (1983). But usually, after these initial nods to the gods, as it were, large gaps appeared when little or no attention was devoted to ethics. But in recent years related articles in these communication journals are increasingly evident.4

This article examines where the gaps in ethics inquiry in human communication are and what the current research interests in this area suggest for further inquiry into this perennial concern.

Defining Ethics in Human Communication

Although this article is focused on journal articles in the Communication field, it seems appropriate to define "communication ethics" by referring to contemporary "ethics of human communication" texts. Our field has not witnessed a large number of texts in this area, but those written have been thoughtful contributors to the ethics of communication question. Lee Thayer's edited work, Communication: Ethical and Moral

Issues, Thomas Nilsen's Ethics of Speech Communication, 2nd ed., and Richard Johannesen's Ethics in Human Communication, 2nd ed., all point to a similar definition of communication ethics. There is significant consistency in how each of these texts defines choice-making as the central component in the ethics of communication.

Thayer emphasizes choice and responsibility in a communication ethic. He contends that one must responsibly accumulate enough information so one's privately and publically stated belief structures are grounded in knowing choices, not blind allegiance to particular social institutions.[5] Johannesen, in what is now the major work on ethics in Speech Communication, Ethics in Human Communication, lists the term choice or significant choice twenty-five times in the index to his first edition, more than any other term.[6] It is, however, Thomas Nilsen who is best known for the choice-making perspective in communication ethics. Nilsen defines the notion as follows.

> When we communicate to influence the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of others, the ethical touchstone is the degree of free, informed, and critical choice on matters of significance in their lives that is fostered by our speaking. We shall call this significant choice. [7]

The key to the notion of choice as the foundation for communication ethics is stated succinctly by Bormann. An ethical decision implies choice. One should neither be praised nor blamed, for the consequences of actions not knowingly chosen.[8] Throughout the literature reviewed in this article, the notion of choice is salient. We may have disagreement about what is ethical, but there is clear agreement on the centrality of choice-making in a communication ethic.

The relationship between communication ethics and choice-making has a long and rich intellectual history. In communication studies we are

heirs to a practical discourse tradition phronesis, that seeks to mediate between universal truths and the concrete situation;[9] such action is referred to as "deliberate choice." Focus on deliberate choice via practical discourse can be found in Aristotle,[10] Gadamer, who believes his philosophical hermeneutics to be the contemporary extension of Aristotle's practical philosophy,[11] Richard Bernstein's pursuit of a practical alternative to the objectivistic/relativistic dichotomy,[12] and MacIntyre's use of Aristotle's practical reasoning in understanding ethical issues.[13]

A tracing of our indebtedness to a phronesis tradition is beyond the scope of this paper, but what is of immediate significance is that in our discipline the understanding of ethics has very practical roots of deliberate choice. Deliberation involves a knowledge of the tradition. Choice implies a conscious and creative use and sometimes an alteration of that tradition, in order to meet the needs of the contemporary situation. Thus, ethical issues in communication are not just bound by tradition, nor only individually created, but are rather a combination of both in a deliberate choice tradition. The choice-making tradition is, thus, the foundation of our communicative approaches to ethics. However, as the following reveals, in the "best" of this choice-making emphasis, there is no one universally approved standard for implementing such an orientation.

In addition to the three major ethics of communication texts described above, four introductory articles deserve special attention. First, Vernon Jensen's "An Analysis of Recent Literature on Teaching Ethics in Public Address" (1959) provided a beginning categorization of communication ethics research: (1) Judeo-Christian, (2) democratic, and (3) scientific descriptive.[14] Robert C. Johnson, "Teaching Speech

Ethics in the Beginning Speech Course" (1970), researched how many Speech instructors stated that ethics "should be" taught (90%) and how few actually did teach it in the Speech classroom (28%).15 Also, Richard Johannesen, as guest editor of Communication, devoted an entire volume to ethics (1981). In his introductory remarks, he made the case for the human being as homo ethicus, 16 which provides us with the task of discovering how those ethical decisions are made.

Chesebro's 1969 summary of some of the representative standards used in communication ethics assisted this project. He summarized five major areas of communication ethics research: democratic ethics, universal humanitarian perspectives, prescriptive measures, freedom of speech, and contextual ethics.[17] This article adopts Chesebro's first three categories and his last one, contextual ethics. Freedom of speech articles are not examined in this current review and a new category has been added, narrative ethics. In short, within the choice-making genre, this author has grouped five different methods for actualizing that orientation: (1) democratic ethics, (2) procedural, standard, and code ethics, (3) universal-humanitarian ethics, (4) contextual ethics, and (5) narrative ethics.

The bibliography of ethics articles published in Speech Communication journals is compiled at the conclusion of this review, according to the above ethics categories. The following review describes the substance of each of the above groupings by highlighting some articles as representative scholarship in each area. The author acknowledges that some of the articles could potentially have been placed in more than one category. The five divisions are not mutually exclusive; rather they are simply aids in discerning the diversity and direction of our disciplinary

inquiry in the ethics of human communication area.

Democratic Ethics

The democratic ethics category is the best known in our discipline. Every previous effort at summarizing the literature in communication ethics has utilized this category as a significant classification.18 And, of course, every beginning communication student learns of our disciplinary roots in Greek democracy.19 As traditional as this approach may be, it seems to warrant particular attention today. Seventeen articles were reviewed in the democratic ethics category, with the earliest being Miller (1936), and Hart (1985) and Redding (1985) providing the most recent contributions. The following were frequently used concepts and metaphors for this approach: democracy, self-determination, linking democracy and conscious rational choice, debate and open discussion, freedom of dissent, cooperative controversy, democracy as methodology for discussion, and recognition of the value of diversity of opinion.

The significance of the above terms is brought into sharp contrast by some social analysts, including a few Speech Communication scholars claiming that democratic metaphors are under attack in a more competitive and less sharing environment. Daniel Yankelovich has polled American youth on value issues for the last three decades. His analysis of the 1980's reveals an increasing acceptance of values that do not serve a democracy. Today, winning is viewed as more important than principle by many. Cutting corners and using questionable means becomes increasingly more common in a time of perceived limits, not abundance.[20] As one author stated, it is even difficult to pursue truth on a university campus

today. Instead of an openness to inquiry, one finds "...hard-heartedness, self-centeredness, possessiveness, materialism and driving competitiveness refected on campus by students, faculty and administration."[21]

One may find the above statements a bit harsh on the current mood of the culture. But a recent and similar analysis was offered by one of our discipline's foremost political analysts, Rodney Hart. His message was straight-forward. All communication has a political dimension. Today the more liberal democratic perspective is taking a beating, but will re-emerge, as all significant ideas do in time. In contrast with the current mood, our discipline must continue to contribute to the well being of our democracy. "Courses in communication teach us to accept boat-rocking, protests, and free speech as a necessary and desireable part of the American tradition."[22] In another 1985 article, Charles Redding made a similar point about organizational communcation. He stated that an organization should earn, not demand loyalty and trust. He was distressed when a business speaker stated, "We don't particularly need boat-rockers."[23] His point was that our discipline has traditionally and should continue to encourage boat rocking (dissent within the boundaries of the organization) and whistle-blowing (informing authorities outside an organization about what needs exposure and reform) when such action is necessary.[24]

Both Redding and Hart encourage a renewal of democratic metaphors, such as dissent, free discussion, and debate in the speech communication classroom. Perhaps they would encourage informing introductory communication students about Karl Wallace's classic article, "The Ethical Basis of Communication," which still provides a foundation for democratic ethics discussion in communication studies. Wallace's statement of the

four "habits" necessary to keep democratic communication ethics vibrant has provided the background for much of the inquiry in this area.

Wallace first discussed a "habit of search," implying a willingness to grapple with the complexity of any issue. One should search out information that both confirms and questions one's own premises. Second, the "habit of justice" requires presenting all the information openly and fairly without distortion. He suggested a third habit of "prefering public to private motivation," which requires a person to share sources of information and any special biases or motivations that might affect the presentation. Finally, he calls for a "habit of respect for dissent" in the "marketplace" tradition of wanting the "best" ideas to rise to the surface of debate and conversation.[25] Grounding ethics in democracy is consistent with Cicero's hope of giving the majority a vote and limiting the power of the elite and "expert" class. "'It is plain that what the multitude approves must win the approval of experts.'"[26]

Wallace's "habit of permitting dissent" is at the heart of Haiman's belief that when one discovers an unusual imbalance of power and an unwillingness to listen to the less powerful, protest and dissent in the streets, not just in the courts, is necessary.[27] Such protest may be necessary when those in power short-circuit open discussion of ideas and act in direct violation of democratic ethics.[28] As Day suggested, open discussion is the methodological door to a democracy.[29] To stop the possibility of argument and questioning takes the conceptual heart from a democracy.

It is this emphasis on open discussion that paved the way for Brown and Keller's merging of interpersonal communication and democratic ethics, no longer limiting this orientation to rhetorical scholarship.

> We have said the idea [interpersonal communication ethic] is not a new one. So let us piece together the thinking from which it springs. A number of years ago Thomas Nilsen set forth what he regarded as the paramount values of a democracy. They were: 'A belief in the intrinsic worth of the human personality; a belief in reason as an instrument of individual and social development; man's fulfillment of his potentialities as a positive good.' The values he mentions, interestingly enough, could be translated, almost completely, into Erich Fromm's 'humanistic values.' They seem to us to represent an extraordinarily cogent statement of a value system on which an ethical rhetoric could be established.30

This quotation emphasizes the relationship between rhetoric and interpersonal communication, as centered around the democratic ethic. It also describes the connection between a democratic interpersonal communication ethic and humanistic psychology, founded by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. John Stewart's inclusion of an article by Rogers in all four editions of Bridges Not Walls indicates the close connection to interpersonal communication.31 Interestingly, Rogers' biographer considers Rogers' approach as American as apple pie and democracy.32 The democratic ethic at work in the humanistic approaches of both Rogers and Brown and Keller in our field is their stressing of the right to be heard. Instead of "one person, one vote," their view seems to be "one person, one voice to which we must listen." Brown and Keller's democratic ethic required maintaining the conditions for development and growth. Being able to listen to another in a non-defensive manner that permits the opportunity to risk growth is fundamental to their ethic and in the best of spirit with the work of Rogers.33

While listening to another is fundamental in a democracy, protest and dissent are also important, which Keller addresses in "Interpersonal Dissent and the Ethics of Dialogue." Keller's position affirms that it is possible to be committed and simultaneously be open to new information.34 Such a position is close to the democratic ideal of

the "best ideas rising to the surface of debate." Second, one must invite an open atmosphere where dissent can occur. Keller concurs with Rogers' belief that a non-defensive atmosphere allows and encourages constructive change.35 The need to listen to dissent and encourage constructive change is central to a democracy wishing to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. As John F. Kennedy stated, "'Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.'"36 In short, both in rhetorical and interpersonal communication the connection to democracy remains a strong and significant part of our historical and contemporary ethics of communication tradition.

Universal/Humanitarian Ethics

Like the democratic communication ethic, a universal/humanitarian ethic centers on the innate worth of the person. However, the universal/humanitarian ethic does not affirm a political system; its goal, in general, is for the person to realize his or her potential as a human being. Twenty-four articles were categorized within the universal/humanitarian perspective, from Pellegrini (1934) to Eubanks (1982) and Stocker (1985). This approach recognizes "fundamental" characteristics that constitute a human being as a social and human contributor. Phrases and metaphors represented by this ethical position, include the following: humanness, culture, wisdom, levels of morality, dignity, social value, human values, reasonable man (person), humane knowledge, principles, critique of ethical relativism, character, commitment, responsibility, and human rights.

Articles reviewed in the universal/humanitarian category are the most diverse of the five categories, perhaps because of the difficulty of

precisely defining what constitutes a universal/humanitarian ethic. However, a common theme of all the articles in this category is the search for something more permanent than ethical relativism. Johnstone (1982) reveals the ground of the universal/humanitarian ethic as the "realization of human being." He conceptualizes a rhetorical mission of generating "humane knowledge."37 The task of rhetoric, then, is not just to locate the available means of persuasion, but to facilitate the "natural capacities and resources...[in] the creation of wisdom in ourselves.38 Rhetoric then becomes the vehicle through which people gather their wisdom as they test propositions in everyday communication. The criteria of success for such a rhetoric is whether or not it permits the human to fulfill, pursue, and further his or her humanness.

Granted, it is difficult to define "humane knowledge," but not impossible for it to be located in discourse.

> Rhetorical activity--the articulation of and response to individual visions of the grounds of legitimate choice--generates opportunities for humane knowing because it invites participants to examine the very ground of their being....This humane knowledge, moreover, is always a potentiality inherent in the relating of one human being to another.39

Johnstone contends that "humane knowledge" is universal; at least potentially available through discourse of one human genuinely encountering another.

Johnstone's pursuit of "humane knowledge" is both similar to and in contrast with Quintilian's urging that the orator study moral principles.40 What Johnstone adds to this perspective is that morality emerges in discourse, not in isolation. The capacity for moral knowledge is always present; however, what makes "humane knowledge" visible is not just studying it alone, but discourse between persons. And

for that knowledge to be humane and universal, in the words of Eubanks, the rhetoric must focus on "the high dignity and essential worth of the individual human person as homo sapiens, or 'the symbol-using animal.'"41

Eubanks called for a rebirth of two terms in communication: culture and wisdom. He lamented that today culture is primarily used in an anthropological sense, instead of its traditional use implying an attribute one should acquire from a good education. Culture, for Eubanks, requires opening oneself to "humane knowledge" not previously visible, and wisdom becomes the vehicle through which culture is creatively put to use.42

Potential for "humane knowledge" is universal, always present, but it is not based on an absolute set of principles. "Humane knowledge" will change; it is not untouched by the historicality of human life.43 "Humane knowledge" is generated through a communicative process that passes on a tradition via a cultured education, but only wisdom can dictate how to use and modify that information. Perhaps the "educated character" of which Martin Buber spoke fits this criteria most clearly. The educated person knows the tradition well, yet can violate it when necessary.44

For those wanting a firmer universal position than that offered by a "humane knowledge" perspective, we need to turn to the work of Kohlberg and then to Weaver. Lower, in discussion of Kohlberg's stages of development, states that Kohlberg's approach is often viewed as a universal description of moral stages. Lower uses Kohlberg's stages to assess the moral character of a speech by comparison to the following stages.

(1) Preconventional level of moral development
(a) Stage one: There is an overt response to punishment in stage one.
(b) Stage two: Recognizes the importance for instrumental action and the necessity to satisfy one's own needs.

(2) Conventional level of moral development
(a) Stage three: Importance is attached to being a nice boy or girl and behavior is judged by attributed intention.
(b) Stage four: Is typified by being a rule follower.

(3) Post-conventional level of moral development
(a) Stage five: One is willing to follow a social contract with the possibility of changing the rules to fit the unique situation.
(b) Stage six: One chooses ethical principles that are uniquely applied to human situations, such as justice, reciprocity, and equality.[45]

Lower offers Kohlberg's system as a measurement of an audience's moral development, in order to adapt a moral rhetoric at an accessibility level appropriate for the audience.[46] Kohlberg's levels of moral development are universal in the sense that they are perceived to be the form taken by the growth of a person's humane or moral knowledge, with only the final stage permitting "humane knowledge," pointed to by Johnstone.

Johannesen reveals Weaver's communicative ethic as fitting this universal/humanitarian perspective even more closely than Kohlberg's system. Weaver's rhetoric is guided by a Platonic idealism grounded in the importance of universal principles.

> As a Platonic Idealist, Weaver believes in the reality of transcendentals, the primacy of ideas, and the view that form is prior to substance. Reality for him is a hierarchy in which the ultimate Idea of the Good constitutes the value standard by which all other existents could be appraised for degree to which things and ideas in the material world conform to their archetypes and essences.[47]

Reality for Weaver is independent of the person; it consists of principles that are lasting, given, and good.[48] The task of rhetoric

is to actualize or bring into the open the Ideal for a particular situation. Rhetoric infuses values into human interaction, providing a picture or vision by which the human can "better" him/herself.[49] Arguments are then judged by their approximation of the ethical Ideal, which is given a priori to human interaction. The following are argumentative styles, hierarchially ranked according to their approximation of that Ideal: (1) argument from rational definition, (2) argument from similitude, (3) argument from cause/effect, and (4) argument from circumstances. In short, arguments from genus and similitude are preferable to those initiated from cause-effect reasoning and circumstances.[50]

Weaver, even more so than Johnstone, affirms the universal. Where Johnstone would ground the universality of humane discourse as a possibility that is historically rooted, Weaver follows Plato's lead of a Universal Ideal that one seeks to approximate in discourse. But in both cases, it is communication or rhetoric that is needed to actualize the "humane knowledge" or the "ultimate Idea of Good."

Codes, Procedures, and Standards in Communication Ethics

This section groups together efforts to find an objective or public position on what is and is not ethical in communicative behavior. Thirty-six articles were grouped in this categoy from Knower (1929) to Bennett (1985). Rating scales, standards, codes of ethics, procedures for argument, testing and/or measurement of values, ethical proof, and guidelines are words and phrases used to describe this approach to communication ethics.

The establishment of a code or standard is often critiqued as an a

priori unflexible approach to ethics. This author, like many trained in the aftermath of Thomas Kuhn's description of multiple paradigms, is skeptical of standard generating efforts.[51] Yet in persuasive fashion, Bernstein takes Gadamer to task for not seriously appreciating what the Enlightenment did for thoughtful inquiry--it brought standards of "truth" determination out into the public arena of debate. "I have argued Gadamer is really committed to a communicative understanding of truth, believing that 'claims to truth' always implicitly demand argumentation to warrant them but he has failed to make this view fully explicit."[52]

Current philosophers have begun to recapture the significance of standards and are looking for something "beyond" objectivism and relativism.[53] In this light, the examination of standards begins to take on a "new" significance. An element of truth is present in the search for such standards, as Bernstein suggests, when argument invites public disclosure and encouragement of dialogue about proposed and established standards. The rationale for generating standards for critiquing the ethics of human communication is succinctly detailed by Haiman in a 1952 article.

> Our question now becomes, not 'Is it done?' or 'Is it necessary?' but 'Ought it to be done?' When we raise the question as to whether something ought to be done we imply that there are certain standards or criteria by which we can judge and evaluate it.[54]

As a discipline, we have grappled with Haiman's "Ought it to be done?" in articles debating whether or not students should be encouraged to debate both sides of an issue, the ethics of ghostwritten speeches, and the procedures for arguing value laden propositions. We can still find colleagues in favor of Murphy's position that one should not debate both sides of an issue,[55] as well as supporters for the response a year

later (1958) by Dell that debating both sides of a proposition is academically justifiable.[56] The weight of supportive opinion rests with Dell, 93%, according to Klopf and McCroskey.[57] The issue still remains for some, "What procedural code should we permit to govern a debate contest?"

The argument between Bormann and Auer concerning ghostwriting reveals a similar set of questions. In 1961, Bormann stated that for a speech to be ethical it must satisfy one of two standards. The speech must be written by the individual delivering the speech or the speaker must credit the real author at the beginning of the oration, just as one footnotes a term paper.[58] On the other hand, Auer's standard is what he terms a pragmatic posture. His concern is not to call ghostwriting unethical, but to hold a speaker accountable for whatever he or she says, whether written by that person or not. He suggests that most average citizens probably do not care whether a speech is ghostwritten and major figures require such help simply due to lack of time. Thus, holding a speaker accountable for ideas shared as his or her is the most practical standard one can devise for evaluating the ethics of a ghostwritten speech.[59]

Arguments on debating both sides of an issue and ghostwriting point to the difficulty of agreeing on an ethical standard for the evaluation of communication. Following the effort to form a code or standard, Rieke and Smith investigated the question for debate. They found that an individual code of ethics was not a major problem in competitive debate; the various advocates regulate one another fairly well.[60] They suggest a greater concentration on the structure of debate as an academic endeavor, rather than on the ethics of individual

persons. They advocate limiting sophistry and maximizing the pursuit of knowledge over winning. Two basic standards for debate activity were proposed. First, investigation should be encouraged over gamesmanship. Second, a variety of techniques should be established that permit more quantity and quality time to be devoted to examining the evidence.[61]

Warnick also followed in this tradition by attempting to establish a standard for implementing a value debate. Her work is too extensive to be outlined here, but is grounded in a concern that conventions and guidelines for value advocacy are needed in order to debate value questions.[62] Her thesis parallels that of Bernstein, asking for a standard from which one can, at least to a degree, judge the "truth" value of an exchange.

Rice clearly called for a set of standards in a code of ethics for the Speech Communication Assocation. He provided a lengthy description of guidelines for constructing a code, including who should be involved in the construction, and the problems such a code should attempt to alleviate for the Communication discipline.[63] Rice structures his suggestion for a code of standards for the discipline with the recognition that "... mankind has been concerned with standards by which to measure behavior for some thousands of years."[64]

The most recent contribution in the standard genre comes from political scientist, Lance Bennett. He proposed a standard to limit what he terms "negative communication." He contends that negative communication discourages challenging of content assumptions in discourse. Negative communication rationalizes the status quo and negates innovation. It inappropriately meshes concepts with data in order to make one's own point, rather than reflect what has transpired. All facts are pressed

"into the service of already, determined, idealized versions of reality."65

Bennett quotes McGee warning that a view uncritically accepted and left with no counter-myth can decay leaving behind only a word or "ideograph," instead of a conceptually powerful rhetorical vision.66 Negative communication leaves us with a dominated communicative structure that in the long run will atrophy from lack of seasoned and thoughtful defense. He then proposes a series of propositions or standards to minimize "...systematic negative communicative strategies that subvert possible new realities while reaffirming existing categories of 'preferred thought.'"67 In short, standards, codes, and procedures are not just out-dated ways of approaching communicative ethics, but serve a contemporary purpose of making public our expectations for communicative behavior.

Contextual Ethics

Sixteen articles were organized under the contextual category, with Schrier (1930) and Bormann (1985) offering initial and contemporary contributions to this approach. Choice, variability, flexibility, critique of absolutes and universals, rule violation, audience and context adaptation, belief and a value manifested in a specific situation, reflect vocabulary associated with this approach. Contextual ethics in communication offers a strong counter-part to the above emphasis on standards. A contextual approach to ethics is not void of all standards, but provides a dialectical checks and balances. When standards become too rigid, an emphasis on the context becomes necessary in order to infuse flexibility into an ethical system.

A contextual ethic has been of significant benefit in the study of other cultures. Condon reminds of us that values and ethics are generally not universal, but are culturally or contextually rooted. Even when an ethical standard is carried out across cultures, the manner in which it is implemented is generally distinct.[68] Condon's message is akin to that of Schrier fifty years earlier. "There is no separate standard of ethics for public speakers; each case of persuasion must be judged in the light of the particular instance, and according to the prevailing standard of ethics of the community or of the individual."[69] Contextually sensitive approaches announce the continuing need for such an approach to offset legalistic and unflexible standards.

When we view ethics through the notion of choice in our individually oriented culture, a contextual approach becomes even more understandable. For the individual to make a difference in our culture, we encourage "choosing" in the situation and perhaps breaking with tradition.[70] An individual choice motivation may have encouraged Thoreau to speak on behalf of John Brown and for Towne and Stringfeller to support the civil disobedience of the Berrigan brothers.[71] As Burgess suggested, no matter what meta-moral perspective one attempts to work from, in the moment of crisis an individual decision must be made that may or may not conform to standards and principles normally affirmed.[72]

It has been determined empirically and by everyday sense perceptions that people do lie a great deal and justify their actions on the basis of context. One group of authors posed the question: Is contextual lying a communicative competence or not?[73] The primary thrust of the article was that the context is a powerful determiner of what is or is not appropriate. The contextual lying question becomes even

more significant in light of the fact that some communicative actions are more irreparable than others, according to Cox. All communicative acts are not necessarily irreparable, but when confronting those situations that may be we must make informed choices and permit enough time pressure to make an ethical decision.[74] Combining the notions of contextual lying and Cox's sensitivity to the irreparable, is it possible that people often lie in what are considered potentially "irreparable communicative exchanges," when not enough informed choice and time have been allocated for a straight-forward communicative exchange?

Whether in lying, recognizing a communicative situation as irreparable, or adapting to an audience, culture, or relationship, communication is often contextually based. Contextual ethics finds theoretical support indirectly and overtly from Einstein, Heisenberg, and Fletcher's situational ethics, repectively. Contextual communication ethics provides a needed counter-balance to tradition that has become a rigid set of a priori limitations.

Narrative Ethics

Many of the articles in this final category, narrative communication ethics, would have been placed in a contextual genre prior to the contributions of Hauerwas, MacIntyre, and Fisher[75]. However, such work has opened up another view of ethics that permits, in hermeneutic language, the "fusion of horizons" of the "hermeneutic circle" to be given birth,[76] in which case the tradition of the event being examined and the tradition of the interpreter are both permitted to affect and alter the outcome, but neither event nor interpreter can dictate the final interpretation. As Bernstein's Objectivism, Relativism, and Beyond

suggests, there is an effort to find a third alternative to objectivism (inflexible standards) and relativism (contextualism). One could even make a case that democratic ethics and the universal approach to ethics are simply dramas or stories from which we can understand the notion of ethics. In short, this author sees the narrative approach to ethics as the most far reaching and encompassing of the five approaches outlined in this review.

Narrative ethics, including articles directly addressing this approach and those providing a preliminary understanding, number twenty-three with Free (1968) and Frentz (1985) offering indirect and recent and direct narrative emphases, respectively. Words and phrases associated with narrative ethics are as follows: narrative, Homer, story, community, drama, and homo narrans. This story-telling orientation is closely tied to an understanding of praxis that is grounded in "practice," rather than "technique." "Technique" is a "cookbook" or formula dictating a precise method to follow. "Practice," on the other hand, is rooted in tradition, with sensitivity and flexibility to the unique demands of the situation.[77] Practice emerges from a story or narrative that can guide and be modified to meet the requirements of the on-going moment. Numerous Biblical scholars have searched the Old and New Testaments for an ethical technique, only to be met with disappointment. The Biblical narrative invites practice, not technique; guidelines are given, but flexibility is permitted in the actualization of the guidance. Praxis as practice requires, not a set of rigid laws to follow, but a story to guide people, a willingness to bring into dialogue the story and the contemporary moment, and a desire to find "truth" that provides a vision

without locking the follower into an uncompromising pattern or technique.

The narrative approach is the most recent contribution to the study of communicative ethics. However recent this approach may be, like any theory, it did not emerge spontaneously without assistance from conceptually distant cousins.[78] Kenneth Burke's dramatistic approach to communication was used by Chesebro over fifteen years ago, as another way to understand communication ethics. Chesebro conceptualized Burke's pentad as a synthesizer of various approaches to communication ethics. Chesebro correlated each element of Burke's pentad with five different approaches to ethics of communication.

A. Purpose--Democratic ethics

B. Agent--Individual humanitarian ethics

C. Agency--Ethical means consistent with society's prescriptions

D. Act--Communication process, related to freedom of speech ethics

E. Scene--Context or contextual ethics[79]

The primary connections between narrative and Burke's pentad are the similarites between drama and story and how various ethics of communication approaches can be synthesized under dramatistic and narrative orientations.

Chesebro's work with the pentad combined "purpose" and "duty," with purpose being a commitment to democratic ethics and duty requiring one to follow an individual duty of humanitarian ethics. Henry Johnstone, Jr. also combined teleological (purpose) and deontological (duty) approaches to ethics. A communication ethic must be both "reflective" and a "doing" ethic, which the combining of teleological and deontological functions provides.[80]

Crable, in another explication of Burke's dramatistic approach,

used Burke's pentad to ground ethics in the realm of moral action (a combination of teleological and deontological), not adherence to an inflexible code of ethics. In such an approach it is not the code, but how the code is used in the narrative or drama that is crucial to the ethics of human communication. The code is not the ending, but the starting place of an ethical drama.[81] In short, a dramatistic approach to ethics begins to point to an alternative to strict reliance on a code and to the other extreme of contextualism. Such an effort is consistent with others attempting to locate an alternative to objectivism and relativism in communication ethics. The desire is to discover a way of conceptualizing flexibility within tradition.[82] A narrative approach to communication ethics, like Burke's pentad, seeks an alternative to objectivism and relativism by synthesizing a variety of ethical orientations.

The synthesizing function of narrative or story is appropriately supported by a community ethic. Hauerwas' analysis of Watership Down reveals this community element of narrative well.[83] Fisher follows this view in his discussion of story providing a public arena for ethical decision-making.[84] Fisher states that individual and privatized ethics are contrary to public disclosure requiring community to openly discuss guiding stories.

This community focus in narration has also been addressed in some earlier related articles. To experience community, one must be involved in the story. Andersen broadens community involvement with his 300% formula of responsibility in communication--100% for the speaker, another 100% for the receiver, and a final 100% for non-participant in the conversation that might be directly or indirectly affected in the

future.[85] The implication of Andersen's suggestion is that a story or narrative is not just the responsibility of those immediately in the conversation, but the innocent by-stander as well. Communication carries with it the power to alter actions of those both directly and indirectly involved, the conversants and the silent audience. The character of community is then dependent on the stories affirmed and left unchallenged. To alter a community requires offering a counter-story and recognizing one's own involvement, whether direct or not. Argument or the offering of counter-stories becomes the central key in a story-telling ethic.[86]

Argument within community in today's complex society needs to be grounded in standards sensitive to a pluralistic community. The final article in this prelude to a discussion of narrative provides us with a pluralistic definition of community. Brummett's "A Defense of Ethical Relativism as Rhetorically Grounded" is a connecting link between narrative and community. As he defends relativism, he simultaneously acknowledges that relativism cannot be adhered to absolutely; otherwise it becomes an inherent paradox. Such a questioning of relativism must occur for community to be taken seriously. Community is based on standards with some, but not total openness. Brummett calls for community standards sensitive to a pluralistic set of participants.

> ... the relativist's problem of judging across social boundaries occurs more often in philosophy than in fact. German Nazis ought to know better because they do share community with Jews, Slavs, Yankees, and the dissenters of their culture. Relativists and absolutists have been too quick to equate geographic or racial differences with a narrow and atomistic conception of the social groups that legitimate ethical values.[87]

Brummett's desire to ground ethics in pluralistic community standards that must be actualized rhetorically is akin to the effort of

Alasdair MacIntyre, whose most recent work, After Virtue, combines similar elements. Both are concerned about rhetoric and community standards, only MacIntyre more fully accepts the significance of narrative. In a description of MacIntyre's work, Frentz defines narrative as the forging of past and future into the temporal present.

> Narratives are dramatic stories with beginnings, middles, and ends which give individual actions meaning, provide unity and self-definition to individual lives, and facilitate improvement of the impersonal good for humankind by showing the future as potential extensions of the present.88

Narrative or story provides a community with a why or context for action and rhetoric of practice implements the "doing". As Frentz suggests, MacIntyre forges Homer (story) and Aristotle (practical action) into a narrative that propels one to action, not just aesthetic enjoyment of the story line.90

Fisher also uses MacIntyre's approach in his discussion of narration and community. Fisher refers to MacIntyre's description of the human as a story-telling animal.

> Dewey (1927) himself noted the eclipse of the 'public' and doubted its reemergence. His hope was the development of 'communities.' Interestingly, 55 years later, MacIntyre concludes After Virtue with the observation: 'What matters at this state is the construction of local forms of community with which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained.90

For community to emerge, ethical standards must come forth in the public debate and a story must begin to guide the participants.

For Fisher, the narrative paradigm unites the literary or aesthetic and the argumentative and persuasive traditions. Fisher describes four major features of the narrative paradigm. First, the notion of story transcends many of the modern dualisms that confront us, such as fact-value and reason-emotion. Second, a lasting story has a

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value and moral dimension to it. Third, reason itself is grounded in the background of story, not the dry waste of unconnected facts. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly for Fisher, narrative offers a way of resolving the problems of public moral argument.[91]

Fisher states that the "rationality" of the "experts" stops discussion. Only those with appropriate credentials are permitted to join the debate. From this point of view, the audience is passive and must accept the view of the rational experts. However, from a story-telling perspective the "expert" is a story-teller and the audience participates in the narrative. Argument is permitted as rival experts become people with contrasting stories with the audience involved in each.[92] As in Andersen's 300% statement of communication ethics responsibility, the audience becomes actively involved.[93]

Fisher's goal is to bring the audience into the drama as active participants. They must be given a chance to decide what is and is not ethical or moral. The "rationality of the experts" excludes them from the debate. In contrast, viewing the "expert" as a story-teller with an active audience invites discussion, bringing us back to the familiar theme of choice-making. An active audience is more likely to pursue choice-making and responsibility than those who abdicate their rights to the experts. Thus, it is story, not the rationality of the few that keeps the conversation going and the assumptions challenged.

Conclusion

My charge by the Ethics of Communication Commission was to examine the status of ethics of communication research in our journals. Clearly, the research in this area is healthy and vital. Each of the ethics

categories described--democratic ethics, universal/humanitarian ideals, standards and codes, contextual responses, and narrative--has a tradition and a contemporary contribution for our discipline. No one approach seems deserving of our attention more than another. Currently the narrative approach is attractive, but its novelty may be the cause. However, the narrative approach is enticing because it is a way of describing the other approaches as particular stories about ethics of communication.

Yet it is clear to this author that significant research questions still need to be answered in each of the five categories of communication ethics discussed in this article. For example, suppose we examine the notion of the perception of limited resources and ask questions about each of the five ethics of communication perspectives. How does a perception of limited resources affect the use of democratic ethics in communicative interaction in organizations? In a time of limited resources, how do we differentiate between rationality and simple defense of the staus quo in communicative discourse? (Rationality for whom, based on what standards?) Do limited resources require the use of codes and standards to ensure proper distribution and clear communication of expectations and responsibilities? In what context should one violate a rule or communicative code, in order to control misuse of limited resources? And finally, what narrative or communicative stories should we offer our students about the struggle for success in a time of perceived limited resources?

In short, in any complex issue such as the above, all five categories of communication ethics are needed. There is substantial inquiry required in the area of ethics of human communication. Such a research topic is not likely to ever be closed to needed investigation.

Communication ethics is a perennial concern for our discipline and for other disciplines as well. We cannot adopt one standard and expect it to meet the test of every situation for all time, but we can help our students and others recognize the importance of choice-making and responsibility in communication ethics. If we are to be concerned about ethical issues in communication and do not wish to place ourselves at the mercy of expert opinion, then argument, debate, and public discourse over what is and is not ethical must continue. If we are to be good choice-makers, we must actively pursue opportunites to ask ethical questions about the process and the content of communication. For as Johannesen quotes Charles Frankel, "'All that follows from the fact there are no experts in morals is that morals are everybody's business.'"[94]

FOOTNOTES

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[19]See for example,James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist, and William E. Coleman, The Rhetoric of Western Thought, 2nd. ed., (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 31-38.

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